

PMI® Global Accreditation Center for Project Management

Site Visit and Evaluation Report of the

Project Management Program  
Executive Education

**The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD)  
School of Management**

**Final Report**

August 2005

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## **1. Introduction and Recommendation**

The Project Management Institute (PMI®) Global Accreditation Center for Project Management (GAC-PM) was established with the specific responsibilities and functions to ensure a continual and effective process for the Accreditation of degree-granting programs pertaining to the field of project management.

In accordance with the procedures of the GAC-PM, an application for accreditation was submitted by the Project Management Program, Executive Education, The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), School of Management (Applicant), based on the Self-Study Report dated March 15, 2005.

A site visit team of colleagues and peers was proposed by the GAC-PM and accepted by the Applicant. The application was carefully reviewed by the GAC-PM Board and the site visit team. After agreement on the site visit dates, telephone and e-mail communications were conducted by the Chair of the site visit team and the Applicant to establish the agenda and process for the site visit. The site visit was conducted on May 31 – June 2, 2005.

This report provides a summary of the findings of the site visit team and recommends to the GAC-PM the accreditation of the Applicant's program.

## **2. Site Visit Format and Process**

The site visit team was composed of the following colleagues and peers:

- Frank T. Anbari, on-site visit team chair
- Jimmie L. West, on-site visit team member

The objectives of the site visit were to verify and clarify statements made in the self assessment report, obtain appropriate updates to that report, prepare a site visit report, and make a recommendation concerning the accreditation of the Applicant.

The site visit team arrived to the Applicant's location on the afternoon of May 31, 2005, was met at the airport by the Applicant's program director, Jim Joiner, and had a preliminary informal meeting and dinner with him in the evening and a tour of the campus in the morning of June 1, 2005. On June 1 – 2, 2005, the site visit team conducted a rigorous review of the program, interviewed the vice provost, the associate dean of the school, the program director, full-time and part-time faculty members, on campus and online students and alumni of the program, online learning team, and other staff members of

the Applicant. The site visit team had lunch with faculty members of the Applicant on June 1 and 2, 2005 and had dinner with the Applicant's program director on May 31 and June 1, 2005. During various activities, the site visit team appropriately gathered data, sampled the curriculum in each specified domain, reviewed assignments and evaluations to ensure that learning objectives are met. The site visit team analyzed the resulting information and adjusted the agenda, as needed, to ensure full understanding of how performance outcomes are achieved and verified. The visit was concluded in the afternoon of June 2, 2005 with the site visit team presenting its findings to the Applicant during the exit interview session. The Applicant's program director kindly drove the site visit team to the airport.

The site visit team wishes to thank the administration, faculty, and staff of the Applicant for their kind reception, cooperation, candor, and hospitality.

### **3. Summary of Findings**

#### ***3.1 Overview of the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), School of Management, Executive Education, and the Project Management Program, with Associate Dean Dr. David Springate***

Dr. David Springate, Associate Dean of Executive Education in the School of Management, UTD discussed the growing need for project management (PM) in industry. He stressed the importance of staying in touch with needs of industry. He mentioned UTD's Industry Council and visitation to companies to keep the PM program open to next needs and to ensure good ties with corporations. He discussed the growth of careers in PM and its wider sphere.

Dean Springate said that he believes that the PM program at UTD is among the leaders with unique aspects. He mentioned the other programs within Executive Education at UTD. He specified the PM program has rigor and stature and that it is recognized by the school. He mentioned the increasing recognition and use of portfolio management. He indicated that the interdisciplinary nature of the program fulfills the school founders hope. He indicated the school had 4,500 students. He mentioned the importance of quality and keeping the program current. He specified that the school will provide resources to the program as needed and indicated that the school is open to hiring more dedicated faculty to the program as the need arises. He indicated that the school is working on metrics.

Dean Springate discussed the online PM program and indicated that it was equal to the campus program. He indicated that it is expected that the online PM program would surpass the campus program. He stressed that UTD is a major provider of online education in various fields. He indicated that the school and its dean are keen to see UTD as leader in online education. He indicated that the same instructors teach both online and campus programs and that the programs are exact parallels. He mentioned relations with other schools such as ESC Lille and initiatives in China.

Dean Springate said that the program director, Jim Joiner, is respected for what he does and that the program enjoys the dean's support. He stressed the value of external validation by corporations and PMI®. He said that the PM program runs its own budget and that technical, administrative, and staff resources are reviewed every year and modified as needed and that requests for resources are supported and not turned down. He pointed out that the school expects a financial return from the program. He indicated that he would like to see larger classes and more corporate programs.

Dean Springate indicate that the PM program includes traditional areas such as Finance, accounting, organizational structures, international management, marketing, operations management, and quantitative methods. He pointed out that there are no departments but there are area coordinators. He indicated that the emphasis of the program is on domestic markets first and international markets next. He mentioned that the PM program offers a certificate, a Master of Science in Management degree, and Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

### ***3.2 Overview of Project Management Program with the program director, Jim Joiner, and program staff, and Meetings with Program Faculty Members***

#### **3.2.1 Program Summary and Requirements**

The Project Management Program leads to a Certificate, a Master of Science (MS) in Management degree, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree:

The Certificate requires successful completion of 21 credit hours.

The MS requires successful completion of an additional 19 credit hours beyond the Certificate for a total of 40 credit hours.

The MBA requires successful completion of an additional 13 credit hours beyond the MS for a total of 53 credit hours.

The program philosophy is based on an integrated approach that provides a balance between multi-cultural and technology issues. It uses major PM textbooks, the PMBOK® Guide, and PMP® examination preparation material built into the program. The program includes an international study tour that has been conducted in Europe. Brazil may be added to the network in the future.

The online program is based on cohort groups of about 22 students per year. The intent is to cap the group at 30 students. Blackboard course management system is used for the online program. About 20% of incoming students possess a previous graduate degree. Admission to the program is based on the program director's screening and a review by a committee of three members. GMAT examination scores are not required for admission. The program aims to create team bonding and mutual accountability.

The campus PM program is delivered in 3 full days each month. The integrated approach is designed so that as an example, a 4-day course is delivered during portions of on-campus class meetings. Students work on assignments, case studies, and team

activities before and after the campus 3-day class meetings on campus. The online program follows a similar schedule. Online students are encouraged to attend class meetings on campus when they are in town and their schedule allows. Teleconferencing is used widely.

Course coordinators ensure streamlining within and across modules. The program aims for network learning rather than stove-pipe learning. Module facilitators assign grades to appropriate course portions.

Each module is planned with learning objectives, description, description of deliverables, guidance, evaluation/grading scheme, pre- and post- individual and team assignments, measurable deliverables, and criteria for earning points. All major assignments are individual assignments. Individual scores within team assignments are adjusted based on peer teamwork evaluation and conference call participation. Team size is around four students.

Students' evaluations are conducted for each module as well as at exit points from the program (Certificate, MS, or MBA).

### **3.2.2 Program Courses**

Course syllabi were reviewed. A description of courses in the program was included in the application package (volume II).

#### **3.2.2.1 Certificate in Project Management**

The following courses are required for completion of the Certificate in Project Management:

- OPRE 6271 Project Overview and Strategic and Process Management
- OPRE 6372 Project Initiation
- OPRE 6373 Project Planning
- OPRE 6374 Project Planning and Execution
- OPRE 6375 Project Execution and Control
- OPRE 6376 Advanced Project Management and Simulation
- MAS 6301 Studies in Project Management Practice
- MAS 6101 Legal Considerations in Project Management

The above courses are presented in an integrated manner during the first year of the program. The Certificate in Project Management is awarded upon successful completion of these courses (total of 21 credit hours).

### **3.2.2.2 Master of Science in Management**

The following additional courses are required for completion of the Master of Science in Management:

AIM 6201	Financial Accounting
AIM 6202	Managerial Accounting
OPRE 6301	Quantitative Introduction to Risk & Uncertainty in Business
FIN 6301	Financial Management
FIN 6301	Introduction to Marketing Management
International Trip:	
MAS 8v51	Operations Management
MAS 8v45	Strategic Management

The Master of Science in Management degree is awarded upon successful completion of the above additional courses (19 additional credit hours for a total of 40 credit hours).

### **3.2.2.3 Master of Business Administration**

The following additional courses are required for completion of the Master of Business Administration:

OPRE 6302	Operations Management
PBS 6310	Strategic Management
IMS 5200	Global Economy
MECP 6301	Business Economics
MIS 6204	Information Technology & MIS Fundamentals

The Master of Business Administration degree is awarded upon successful completion of the above additional courses (13 additional credit hours for a total of 53 credit hours).

### **3.3 Online Learning Review and Demonstration**

The site visit team reviewed the online program and enjoyed discussions and demonstrations by its support staff (Vinodh/Karthik/Judy). Blackboard course management system is used for this program and is installed on its own server. Students are provided appropriate instructions on use of the system. Audio presentations and pdf copies of presentation slides are provided to course participants through Blackboard. Web Conferencing teleconferences provide follow-up and allow student-instructor interaction. Evaluations and self-study provide opportunities for continual improvement of online program delivery.

UTD has online education programs in other fields.



### **3.4 Meetings with Faculty**

The site visit team had extensive discussions with faculty members to understand the overall content of various courses that deal with topics related to project management learning objectives. The site visit team had lunch with faculty members of the Applicant on June 1 and 2, 2005 and further discussed program content and delivery. The site visit team visited one of the faculty members at his office and observed on his monitor some student papers that were saved on his computer.

### **3.5 Material Review and Discussions of Performance Objectives**

The site visit team verified examples of course content, presentation material, student assessment, and course evaluations.

The site visit team asked the faculty how they ensure that UTD students will be able to meet the specific learning objectives in selected performance domain areas (3.4, 4.2, 4.7, and 6.5), clarified, and verified the following:

- 3.4: Communicate project progress by producing project reports to provide timely and accurate project status and decision support information to stakeholders.

This area is covered in multiple locations in OPRE 6373 Project Planning, and OPRE 6375 Project Execution and Control.

- 4.2 Refine control limits on performance measures by applying established policy in order to identify needs for corrective action.

This area is covered in multiple locations in OPRE 6376 Advanced Project Management and Simulation.

- 4.7 Recognize and respond to risk event triggers in accordance with the risk management plan in order to properly manage project outcomes.

This area is covered in multiple locations in OPRE 6375 Project Execution and Control.

- 6.5 Interact with team and stakeholders in a professional and cooperative manner by respecting personal, ethnic, and cultural differences in order to ensure a collaborative project management environment.

This area is covered in multiple locations in OPRE 6375 Project Execution and Control, as well as in the international trip (MAS 8v51 and MAS 8v45).

The site visit team reviewed student deliverables. A project notebook (part of OPRE 6374 Project Planning and Execution) was reviewed. It was evident that it addresses various areas of knowledge specified in the PMBOK® Guide, from the project charter to risk

management, including WBS, schedule, budget, communications, quality, and human resources.

### ***3.6 Meeting with the Vice-Provost***

The vice-provost teaches one of the modules in the PM program. He discussed that module in the context of using statistics for achieving business results, and indicated his support of the PM program.

### ***3.7 Meeting with Program Direct Support Staff***

The site visit team met with the PM program direct support staff (Judy/Diana/RA/Work-study). Judy mentioned that they model good project processes, are team / project oriented, and give credit to others. They pointed out that executive program students have higher expectations. The direct support staff serves as liaison between students and faculty and handles various program logistics, information sessions, mailings, and financial aid. All support the international trip. They are involved in admissions and marketing. It was pointed out that education is becoming more and more across borders. Mastery in the business of education can eliminate risk.

The PM program direct support staff consists now of 5 individuals including Jim Joiner.

The site visit team reviewed some of the students' evaluations conducted after every module and at program exit points. The evaluations are provided to program faculty.

Support staff indicated that the PM program is dynamic, challenging, and good – That's better in the end.

### ***3.8 Meeting / teleconference with a panel of on campus current students and alumni***

The site visit team met face-to-face and through teleconference with on campus current students and alumni of the program. They provided positive feedback on their educational experience.

Some of their comments were:

- Unique experience
- Enjoyed the interactions
- Some of the professors are incredible
- Jim and Judy make the program
- Tremendous
- Openness of instructors: Can send them a note through Blackboard. E-mailed – response is great
- Professors are outstanding
- International trip was amazing

- After meeting with Jim there was no stopping
- Program is very strong: Jim leadership had a lot to do with it. People at the table have a lot of credit
- Students allow chaos to turn into order
- Value Add to your own job performance
- Good for boss, company, and you
- Another thing that was really interesting is simulation – It shook us up
- From each class was able to take something back and use it
- Teaches you how to adapt to that environment – allowed you to be more successful
- Technical, math techniques, stat / multiple regression – used that at a client
- Very good learning experience
- Germany trip was very informative
- Overall, absolutely excellent – Would recommend it to my co-workers
- Excellent program – Lots of learning
- Extremely proud to be a UTD graduate

When asked for opportunities for improvement, some of their comments were:

- Would have preferred more frequent classes – local
- Audio may need some clean-up. Option to have it on campus
- Familiar in depth with MS Project. Some students were struggling. Use CBT or something
- Some handouts could use work / good
- Closer parking

### ***3.9 Meeting / teleconference with a panel of on online current students and alumni***

The site visit team met face-to-face and through teleconference with online current students and alumni of the program. They also provided positive feedback on their educational experience.

Some of their comments were:

- Online: I wish I could do undergraduate again – Online suited my schedule. Picked convenient time for me. Allows people from other countries to be in class.
- Different people, different industries different countries – How they apply it. Totally different view – Better appreciation of the value.
- Convenient. Travel to Asia for customer. Can listen to teleconference with teacher. No problems getting online.
- Download modules ahead of time – Love program.
- They don't throw you into one thing the whole semester.
- Go back to foundations – Apply them.
- New challenge every week – Never get bored.
- Got to manage around time zones – Same as in work.
- Opportunity to come in and audit class – Best of both worlds

- The surge kept on
- Not: getting titles and not be able to apply them. Not: teaching a book. Not: regurgitating.
- Integration / Real time – Apply at work.
- Learning in first year was incredible
- Student feedback taken and changes made – Jim open and encouraging.
- At least one conference call per class – iPod audio can re-listen to lecture.
- For me, I am quite pleased
- I get so interested in it
- You become more bonded than you ever think you would be
- Non-contributing members get addressed
- Teleconference every other week
- Sense of “it’s a new way of learning”
- Best thing about this program is Judy – Very sensitive to inner workings – Not just Judy, but the IT folks
- You don’t feel like you’re getting a ride – Still have to deliver
- Passion for project management – Passion for topic
- What impressed me is emphasis on applying
- Catered to in first year

When asked about impact of program on professional career, some of their comments were:

- Absolutely
- No question
- It already has
- Would not have been on projects I have otherwise
- Reinforcement about doing the right thing
- Credential carries itself
- Confidence
- Learnt how to cooperate on internal and external projects

Some of the opportunities for improvement mentioned by participants during the session were:

- Same as PMI® – Not emphasizing program management enough – In real life sharing resources
- Missing piece in Corporate America and program: Power and value of managing multiple projects and programs – Area is evolving
- Learning in first year was incredible – Second year classes were rough – More warning needed
- First year passion for program – Second year individual courses / instructors
- Professors make changes
- Own team conference call would be good

### ***3.10 Meeting with a representative of the Advisory Council, Vickie Moore***

The site visit team continued to a meeting with a representative of the Advisory Council, Vickie Moore, who participated in the meeting with the online current students and alumni.

Ms. Moore indicated that the Advisory Council was in start-up mode and had been in place for a little more than a year. She said that Jim Joiner asked alumni of the online and campus PM and MBA programs and others outside UTD to join the Advisory Council. She mentioned that she wants to make sure the degree is valuable. She indicated that the Advisory Council goals have three key focus areas focused around PM / MBA:

- Alumni
- Education
- Marketing / recruiting

She indicated that the Advisory Council has three teams related to what members want to stay engaged in. She said the Advisory Council has an average of 12 people of whom 5 – 6 are customary. Those who are there are very active. The intent is how to bring passion about the school.

She indicated that the Advisory Council is maturing with aims to link back to UTD after leaving, keeping track of how UTD is doing, and enhancing the program.

Follow-up with subject matter expert sessions would be good (in mini courses), speakers and other things to fit into the current program.

### ***3.11 Campus tour***

The Applicant's program director, Jim Joiner, took the site visit team for a tour of UTD's campus in the morning of June 1, 2005. The site visit team noticed the expansive and growing campus and its various educational, library, and other facilities.

### ***3.12 The Exit Interview Session***

During the exit interview session, the site visit team presented verbally a summary of their major findings to the Applicant.

The site visit team indicated that they clarified the structure of the program, its support, its content delivery in both campus and distance modes, its feedback mechanisms, and continual improvement. They indicated that they saw passionate commitment to the program, ownership, and pride by faculty, staff, administration, and students. The site visit team indicated that they noted that the program is contemporary, responsive, and applied. They said that they believe the program covers the content areas relevant to the

learning objectives specified in the Accreditation Handbook, albeit in a geodesic, non-linear manner.

The site visit team pointed out that they obtained the information they needed to prepare a report and recommendation to the GAC-PM. The site visit team indicated their appreciation of the Applicant's preparation efforts and hospitality.

In discussing improvements to the site visit process with the Applicant, the possibility of a 3-member team was raised, each meeting with different faculty members to better understand specifics on faculty roles, in addition to group reviews and questions.

#### **4. Evaluation of compliance with the Standards for Accreditation**

Other matters relevant to the standards for accreditation are addressed in the Applicant's application for accreditation by the GAC-PM.

An evaluation and additional comments on these matters are provided in this section.

**4.1. Mission and objectives:** UTD's program mission and objectives are clearly stated in the application package (volume I). Discussions during the site visit showed alignment with the stated mission and objectives.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.2. Assessment of Anticipated Outcomes:** This matter is addressed in the application for accreditation.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.3. Academic Community/Faculty and Staff:** UTD's project management program enjoys passionate commitment to the program, ownership, and pride by faculty, staff, administration, and students.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.4. Student Support Services:** The project management program is a part of the UTD's system. The program's professional support staff provides appropriate support to both campus and online students.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.5. Student Selection:** This matter is addressed in the application for accreditation.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.6. Curriculum and Learning & Performance Objectives:** This matter is addressed in the application for accreditation and extensively discussed in this report.

Areas of strength of this program include:

- The PM program is contemporary, responsive, and applied.
- The PM program covers the content areas relevant to the learning objectives specified in the Accreditation Handbook.
- The PM program covers PM content in an integrated, geodesic, non-linear manner.
- A balance of academic rigor, creativity, and practical industry applications.
- Qualified, capable faculty.
- Effective professional support staff.
- Full support by UTD leadership.
- Coverage of traditional business topics as well as new and advanced topics.
- Strong involvement with industry.

Opportunities for improvement of this program include:

- More discussions of program management.
- More frequent local classes.
- Clarifying further to program participants the difference between the first year's integrated program and its delivery approach vs. the second year's individual courses and their traditional delivery approach.
- Allowing team conference calls.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.7. Student Performance Criteria:** This matter is discussed in this report. Some of these criteria were verified during the site visit.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.8. Library/Learning Resource Center & Educational Innovations and Technology:** These matters are discussed in this report. Some of these resources were verified during the site visit.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

**4.9. Financial Resources, Facilities and Equipment:** The project management program has access to institutional support and financial resources comparable to those made available to the other similar professional programs within UTD. The PM program runs its own budget. Technical, administrative, and staff resources are reviewed every year and modified as needed. Requests for resources are supported and not turned down. The school expects a financial return from the program.

Applicant demonstrated compliance with this standard.

## **5. Recommendation**

The site visit team unanimously recommends to the GAC-PM the accreditation of the Master of Science degree with an emphasis in Project Management and the Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Project Management at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), School of Management.

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Collegially submitted by the site visit team:

- Frank T. Anbari, on-site visit team chair
  - Jimmie L. West, on-site visit team member
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